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KIEV ALSO FOR USAID
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATION
NEAR RUSSIAN EMBASSY ENDS IN BRIEF ARRESTS AND BEATINGS

Ref: MINSK 527

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) At 20:00 on June 16 near the Russian Embassy (adjacent to U.S. Embassy), 45 activists were briefly detained while observing the Day of Solidarity. The Day of Solidarity takes place on the 16th of every month in support of jailed and missing opposition activists. Similar to the May 16th demonstration (reftel), participants gathered at the Russian Embassy to protest Russia's support for Belarusian president Aleksandr Lukashenko.

¶2. (SBU) Pro-opposition online information source Charter97 (www.charter97.org) claimed 100 people participated, but human rights lawyer Ales Kalyeta told Poloff on June 19 that police and plainclothes officers prevented the event from taking place. Kalyeta explained that security services, commanded by OMON commander Yuri Podobed, detained 30 activists before they reached the Russian Embassy and out of the 20 that were able to congregate opposite the embassy, 15 were immediately arrested. Kalyeta said the detainees were taken to the police department for processing and then driven to Minsk's outer residential areas and released. Several detainees were beaten, including one young activist, Lubov Kuchinskaya, who was transferred to a hospital for complications after being punched by a plainclothes officer. Kalyeta, who too was arrested, noted the security services' behavior as more "barbaric" than usual.

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